

Dear Mr. President:

4/23/60
release more

Each day that passes decreases the possibility of enactment by the 86th Congress of legislation that will recognize and take initial steps to meet the present and increasing shortage of physicians and related health services personnel.

You may recall that I have written you three times in the past year seeking to arouse your interest and elicit your support in this matter that has such a critically important relationship to the Nation's health. I have appreciated your replies to my communications. But I am deeply concerned that there has been no evidence of the willingness of the Administration to act--either in its own legislative and fiscal proposals, or by giving active support to the measures that have been proposed by others.

I am aware that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is considering a legislative proposal which would provide matching grants for the construction of facilities to be used for teaching as well as research in the health sciences. I will be supportive of such legislation if it is transmitted to the Congress, since it undoubtedly parallels in principle the legislation I introduced last year which would authorize \$50 million a year for five years to expand and improve the facilities of existing schools of medicine, dentistry, and public health; \$100 million to be available over a ten-year period for the construction of new schools in these fields; and favorable matching provisions for these projects that would demonstrably expand the number of physicians and related personnel in training.

Recently I have also introduced a legislative proposal to authorize an annual appropriation of \$10 million, to be matched by an equal amount from the States, to provide scholarships for medical, dental, and osteopathic students on the basis of their ability and need as determined by State plans.

Neither my construction nor my scholarship proposal has received the endorsement of the Administration. This is regrettable.

These construction and scholarship proposals, Mr. President, would not fully meet the urgent present and threatening future needs. But they are moves in the right direction, and we must take now that action for which there is precedent under existing policies.

These comments are not made in any partisan or political sense. It makes no difference to me, as I am sure it does not to you, whether the action taken stems from the Congress or the Executive Branch, or whether it has Democratic or Republican auspices. The important thing is for the Federal government to provide leadership in meeting what may well be a national crisis. It must be prepared to meet its share of the responsibility to assure that there will be enough well-trained professional health personnel for tomorrow's needs. In a very literal sense, the future health of the American people is at stake.

I would remind you again that action of the kind I urge does not constitute either a break with precedent or a venture into unexplored fields. Many studies, including most recently the excellent report entitled Physicians for a Growing America, prepared by a group of distinguished

consultants to the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service and commented on favorably by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, confirm that we must act now to alleviate what will certainly be a growing shortage of physicians and other health personnel. Such present programs as the Health Research Facilities Construction Act, the Hospital Construction Act, and the National Defense Education Act clearly demonstrate that construction of facilities and provision of scholarships and loans for higher education are appropriate Federal undertakings in areas of recognized need.

The only possible reason that can be advanced for failing to act positively and constructively to meet this need is cost. I am not impressed with the contention that the Federal government cannot afford to press forward toward assurance of a minimum decent living for all people and toward provision of publicly financed facilities--schools, hospitals, laboratories--on the scale which the Country needs.

Let me, if I may, bring to your attention a few thoughts I presented before the House of Representatives on March 29 of this year.

"This is the richest country in the world, but we tend to act poor when the time comes to consider more adequate financing of the things that we should do as a community and as a Nation. What we really lack is not the economic capacity, but more often the will, the sense of purpose and the vision to move ahead instead of standing still.

"The claim that the Nation cannot afford more medical research, more hospitals, more medical schools, or more school classrooms, is usually not the real reason people are against increased effort in these fields. The same is true of the claim that all of these programs would be better carried out if only they were returned to the States. This is nonsense. Return of the total responsibility for these functions to States would mean starving them to death. In point of fact, the States are doing their part financially. In 1959 the States collected between \$1.5 and \$2 billion additional tax

revenue. These are legislated increases, and not just higher tax returns because economic conditions are good. States and localities are collecting about a third of all governmental taxes--they collect about \$30 billion per year, and all Federal taxes amount to about \$70 billion per year. They are not shirking their tax responsibilities. They are pushing their ability to tax closer to the limit all the time.

"No; the real reason for opposing sustained, modest increases in Federal health and welfare activities, for example, is that some people just do not think these things should be done by Government because they cost money, and they do not believe in having the Federal Government finance these activities simply because it has the tax resources to do a good job.

"Yet, looking to the future, even conservative groups assume that we are going to get wealthier year by year--not wealthier in terms of inflated dollars, but wealthier in terms of goods and services. The Rockefeller report on the U.S. economy pointed out that 'We may reasonably expect a continuation of a growth rate of 3 to 4 percent per year over the next decade and beyond. In fact, a growth rate of 5 percent is possible if we realize fully our impressive opportunities for economic expansion.'

"If we maintain even the medium growth rate of 4 percent, we will be able to expand all Government programs, including defense, as well as such domestic programs as school construction, hospital construction, research, health, and road construction. At the same time, this growth rate will support expanded private investment in better plants and equipment, and increases in family income after taxes. And this can be done without inflation.

"Our real problem is not lack of economic capacity. It is lack of leadership and of a political philosophy that will capitalize boldly and affirmatively on the opportunities that are before us. It is not irresponsible to recommend strengthening good Federal programs.

"Irresponsibility consists of failure to look at problems squarely, to look at our national capacity to solve them, and to take a considered line of constructive action. Irresponsibility arises when facts are not faced."

It is not my belief, Mr. President, that the Federal government should do everything for everybody. I do feel, however, that there are selected, high-priority areas of need which we can and must meet in the National interest. I do not advocate spending for the sake of spending. I do not recommend increases in all areas. I recognize that Federal

expenditures must be paid for. But--having searched vigilantly for priorities, and keeping in mind the vigor and growth of our economy--I do urgently believe that we must enact legislation and provide appropriations to meet the crisis posed by the threat of a shortage of 15,000 physicians and an equal number of dentists by 1975, and the resulting impairment of the level, quality, and distribution of health and medical care services.

I do hope that a way can be found for the Administration to join with the Congress in a program of action in this matter during this session of Congress.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,

John E. Fogarty, M.C.